MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING AT THE CENTURY CLUB,
NEW YORK CITY, ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1916.

Colonel C. A. F. Flagler, United States Engineer Officer in charge of the construction of the new Key Bridge to replace the old Aqueduct Bridge across the Potomac at Georgetown was anxious to get the criticism of the Commission regarding preliminary sketch designs for that structure which had been prepared under his direction by Mr. Nathan C. Wyeth, architect, of Washington.

In view of the impossibility of convening a quorum for a regular meeting on Thursday, August 31, the Chairman appointed Mr. Olmsted, Mr. Gilbert, Mr. Hastings and Mr. Adams a committee with power to pass on this and a number of other matters that had also come up. Arrangements were made for the committee to meet at the Century Club, New York City, at 10 o'clock on Tuesday, September 5, Mr. Moore, the Chairman, being present ex officio. Mr. Bluebfield was also present and Colonel Harts, the Secretary and Executive Officer who had been requested to attend was also present. Mr. Demarer, the Clerk to the Commission, was directed to bring all necessary data for the consideration and assistance of the committee. Mr. Charles A. Platt, architect, of New York, who has been proposed to the President for membership on the Commission, lunched with the members and participated in their deliberations during the afternoon.

KEY BRIDGE

Colonel Flagler laid before the committee as the first thing to be considered a number of preliminary sketches prepared by the architect for the proposed new structure. Mr. Pyeth, the architect, and Mr. Tillman, Colonel Flagler's engineer on this work, were present in consultation. The sketches submitted showed Mr. Pyeth's various studies of the problem and included designs for a 3-span structure and a 5-span structure, as well as different possible treatments of the superstructure. In substance, the proposition of five arches springing from as near as practicable the shore lines of the river in order to have the effect of starting at the bulkhead line and based in general terms upon the idea of a superstructure design elaborated by Mr. Pyeth in one of his studies and pointed out to him, subject to such directions as Colonel Flagler might give as to the form of the arch, was given the preliminary approval of the Commission of Fine Arts. Colonel Flagler was also informed that, after an inspection of these studies, the committee felt that the question of the form of the bridge and the number of arches could be adjusted between Colonel Flagler and his architect, and that, except for the definite approval of the final architectural design, the plans need not be referred again to the Commission

so that work might be started on the piers and foundations without delay.

Further suggestion was made that in designing the bridge, the Architect should have in view the general scale of the city of Washington and that, if possible, a model of the bridge, or at least of a section of the bridge, should be constructed to assist in the designing. (See Exhibit A).

ANACOSTIA WATER PARK.

Colonel Flagler, being in charge of the reclamation and improvement of the Anacostia Flats, also submitted a plan showing the layout for that park, together with details of influent and effluent gate houses, a boat lock and a bridge proposed to be located there as part of the improvement scheme. He stated that while action on the architectural details of the buildings proper was not so pressing, he was anxious to have the action of the committee on the floor plan areas of the buildings, the location of lock foundations and the bridge piers and approaches shown. The committee approved the plans so far as foundations, floor plan areas and bridge piers are concerned, but will not pass above ground, but reserved an expression of opinion on the details of the structures from an architectural standpoint until a later date.

Mr. Olmsted was not quite satisfied with the alignment of some of the

roads, particularly in the vicinity of some of the structures shown, and discussed them later with Colonel Flagler. As a result he dictated an informal opinion for Colonel Flagler's assistance showing possible ways of adjusting the lines of the roads better, a copy of which is attached as Exhibit B. (See also Exhibit C for formal letter to Colonel Flagler on this subject).

STONE FOR LINCOLN MEMORIAL

Colonel Harts informed the committee that the Lincoln Memorial Commission had secured bids on granite for the retaining wall and steps of the Lincoln Memorial and that he would like to have the committee's opinion as to the best of the three kinds of granite under consideration--Milford Pink, Stonington, and Tom Island--samples of which Mr. Henry Bacon, the architect who was present, had brought along. Colonel Harts read an opinion from Daniel Chester French and from Charles A. Platt in favor of Pink Milford granite for this particular work. The committee unanimously selected Pink Milford of the three samples of stone submitted.

PLAN FOR PICNIC PARK

Mr. Clarence A. Kenyon, of Syracuse, New York, is under contract to furnish the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds with a setting-out plan for

the treatment of the grounds between the Washington Monument and the Potomac River and North and South B streets. Colonel Harts submitted this plan to the committee, Mr. Howard being present in consultation. After some discussion the plan was approved subject to a few minor modifications which Mr. Olmsted, who was appointed a committee with power in the matter, was to point out to Mr. Howard. Mr. Howard is to make these changes, the plan thereafter being understood to be in approved shape to have work started.

MERIDIAN HILL PARK.

Colonel Harts laid before the committee various elevations and sections of the north entrance on 16th Street of the Meridian Hill Park improvement scheme. The committee pointed out a number of desirable changes in details which Colonel Harts said would be made. In order to get these criticisms into the best shape for Colonel Harts' guidance, Mr. Platt offered to indicate these changes on a rendering which he would have made in his office. Copies of all the blueprints before the committee were therefore furnished him for this work.

BOTANIC GARDEN

The committee next gave consideration to Senate 6287-64-1, proposing to enlarge the United States Botanic Garden by adding thereto the grounds to the

west known as East and West Potter Park. Mr. Vaughan, Chairman of the House Committee on the Library, had referred this to the Commission with the request for such data as the Commission has "with reference to the effect on the general plan for the development of the Mall and the ground about the Grant Monument." This matter was carefully discussed. It was the conviction of the committee that such a move would work serious injury to the Mall scheme; and that placing glass greenhouses in the direct vista of the Capitol towards the Washington Monument would be a regrettable mistake. (The bill referred to and the report of the Commission is shown under Exhibit D).

PLAN FOR GROUNDS OF RED CROSS BUILDING

Colonel Harts laid before the committee a plan showing the proposed treatment of the grounds around the Red Cross building which is now fast nearing completion. The committee felt that the plan as prepared would not seem to accomplish the purposes desired. Numerous suggestions were made, such as that the automobile parking arrangement planned for appeared to nothing since it was not properly planned, and that it was desirable to have modifications in the sidewalk, walls, planting, and terrace arrangement shown. A restudy is being made having these criticisms in mind.

BATHING BEACH IN POTOMAC PARK

Colonel Harts explained that it was his plan to take over the present private bathing establishment on the west shore of the Tidal Basin in Potomac Park and remove it as a publicly-owned and operated affair to the south shore of the Tidal Basin near the railroad tracks, where it would not only be more accessible by its close proximity to the street car lines but would also not detract from the dignified surroundings of the Lincoln Memorial which might be the case were it to be retained under Governmental control on the old location. The committee felt that this would be a good move and heartily endorsed this plan.

HEIGHTS OF BUILDINGS REPORT

Colonel Harts called to the attention of the committee that the District Commissioners had framed a bill proposing to regulate the height of buildings in the District of Columbia, proportion to follow suggestions made by the Commission of Fine Arts by formal and informal reports. Colonel Harts stated that he had called the attention of the Commissioners to certain defects in the bill and that he had informed them that the matter would receive further consideration from the Commission. Since the reference of this bill Mr. Moore

had succeeded in having introduced in Congress a bill proposing to regulate the height of buildings in the city of Washington which was framed after the New York building law, and had discussed this bill with the District Commissioners. Mr. Moore was therefore appointed a committee of one with power to prepare a draft of the proper reply to be made in view of preceding events. This letter is shown under Exhibit E.

STONE TO BE USED FOR PEDESTAL OF THE KEY MEMORIAL AT FORT McHENRY PARK, BALTIMORE, MD.

Colonel Harts laid before the committee questions arising in connection with the kind of stone proposed by the sculptor to be used in the pedestal and base of the new Francis Scott Key Memorial to be erected at Fort McHenry Park, Baltimore, Md. Mr. Niehaus, the sculptor, proposed to use Tennessee Pink Marble throughout. The committee recommended that this marble be used for the pedestal and base, but that granite be used for the small posts, the curbing and the seats of his scheme.

SUCCESSOR TO MR. GILBERT.

Colonel Harts brought up Mr. Gilbert's resignation and the question of a successor, stating that, following the customary precedure, a suggestion of the Commission's choice should be made to the President. Following an informal and a formal ballot, Mr. William Rutherford Mead, senior member of the firm of

McKim, Mead & White of New York City, was selected as the Commission's first choice. It was further decided that in the event that Mr. Mead would be unable to serve, the name of Mr. William M. Kendall of the same firm, should be submitted.

SIMPLE FORM OF COMPETITIONS.

Colonel Harts called the attention of the committee to the fact that a report had still to be made to the War Department on a simple form of competitions and that this should be accomplished as soon as possible.

There being no more business to come before the committee, they adjourned at 5:30 p. m.

Colonel, U. S. Army,
Secretary and Executive Officer.

Approved:

Chairman.

Re: Preliminary sketch designs for Key bridge.

886

September 19, 1916.

My dear Colonel Flagler:

Confirming the statement of results reached by the Commission of Fine Arts in the conference with you on September fifth: The Commission approved the idea of having the bridge proper begin at or near the banks of the river. The number of spans might be four or five. The design showing continuous penetrations carried above the arches for the full length of the bridge was favored, as was also the idea of a partial filling of the spandrels so as to give an appearance of added strength. It is understood that the spaces between the first piers on each side and the ends of the bridge are to be treated with penetrations as called for by roadways and canals.

I am giving you this memorandum as an official record for your files.

Sincerely, yours,

(Signed) WM.W.HARTS

Colonel, U.S. Army,
Secretary and Executive Officer.

Lieut. Col. C. A. F. Flagler,
Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army,
In Charge, United States Engineer Office,
Washington, D.C.

CM-ABC

A

Memorandum for Colonel Flagler from Mr. Olmsted:

If it is not impracticable for operating reasons to separate the lift bridge over the approach to the lock to a distance of a hundred yards or so from the operating tower of the lock house, the best way of improving the alignment of the drives would probably be to move the bridge up-stream about that distance, somewhat as suggested in pencil on the blueprint. If the separation of the bridge from the lock house is considered highly inadvisable, the whole set of structures might be moved up-stream a hundred yards or more in the direction of the lock channel and the point between the lock channel and the main channel moved up with them. In this case the curve of the westerly wall of the main channel which now meets the tangent from the point about 800 feet up-stream from the lock house would continue down to the point.

I am inclined to think that the location of the influent gate house in relation to the walls should be such that it would be possible to carry the drive on the westerly side of the gate house if that should be found desirable on further study, and also so that it would be possible to carry the drive around this end of the pool without such an abrupt turn. In a general circuit drive of this sort, especially at a point where there is no junction or intersection making it necessary for traffic to slow up, it is desirable not to use a radii of about 300 feet. It would be better to shorten this end of the pool a little than to make the turn on the circuit drive so abrupt.

It is not understood that the Commission is passing at this time in detail on the alignment of the suggested roadways except in the vicinity of the three structures for which detailed plans were presented.

B

November 9, 1916.

My dear Colonel:

In accordance with the request in your letter of August 25th last, and with reference to the Commissions' report of September 8th, the Commission have examined the architectural features of the proposed influent and effluent gate houses, boat lock and bridge to be constructed on the Anacostia Flats and advise as follows:

In their ensemble the Commission find the designs acceptable, and, as you have already been advised, there appears to be no reason why the foundations should not be constructed in accordance therewith. The designs for the superstructure, however, ought to be completely restudied by an experienced architectural designer. Without altering the general arrangements from an engineering point of view the structures can readily be made satisfactory in appearance, but only by such a general restudy. In other words, it is felt that just as the services of competent engineers are essential to the proper construction of the bridge and the buildings, so their architectural features can be treated adequately only by a trained architect.

To mention but a few of the revisions necessary, the Commission call attention to the following items:

C

Effluent Gate and Lock House:

The architectural mouldings throughout.
Proportion of columns.
Window and door cornices.
Balcony.

Stone quoins should be introduced on the second story.

Influent Gate House:

The general mass of the building is satisfactory.

Among the features suggested for revision are the following:

The horizontal divisions, of which there are too many.
The quoins, which should run to the eaves.
The main doorways and windows.

The Allen Bridge over the Lake:

The general ensemble of this bridge is good. The revisions should include:

The mouldings throughout.
The bridge arches, which should be one-centered and not three.
The section through the cornice.
The pier balconies.

By direction of the Commission:

Very truly, yours,

(Signed) WM.W.HARTS

Colonel, U.S. Army,
Secretary and Executive Officer.

Lieut. Col. C. A. F. Flagler,
Corps of Engineers, United States Army,
In Charge, United States Engineer Office,
Washington, D.C.

ARC

November 28, 1916.

My dear Mr. Slayden:

In your letter of August 8th you asked for full information in regard to the project of extending the Botanic Garden to East and West Seaton parks, as contained in the bill (S. 6227, 64th Congress, 1st Session) now pending in the House Committee on the Library.

As you will recall, the Grant Memorial was designed to occupy a space in the White Lot directly behind the White House, a location selected before the plan of 1901 was formulated. After that plan was published the location of the Grant Memorial was changed in accordance with the new plan, which shows the restoration of L'Enfant's idea of a dignified entrance to the Capitol grounds from the west.

The inadequacy of the space occupied by the Botanic Garden was generally recognized, and in 1914 the House Committee on the Library reported a bill (H. R. 12796) to transfer the Botanic Garden to Rock Creek Park. In the report you say:

> It has long been recognized by everyone who has given any attention to the Botanic Garden that in its present site it was restricted and could not possibly develop into anything important or be of much practical value to the country.
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> The Grant Memorial will soon be completed and the present site of the garden will be needed to carry out the landscape design in connection with it and for the opening of the vista to the Washington Monument and the new Lincoln Memorial. The order for the removal of the fence was first made in 1899, but its execution was prevented largely, at least

"D"

November 26, 1918.

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it is understood, through the influence of the late William R. Smith. In 1911 the sundry civil act made an order for the removal of the fence and appropriated the sum of $2,500 to meet charges incident to its removal. Again the removal act was not carried out because no provision has been made for the removal of plants and shrubs, and the superintendent protested that to take away the fence would, under the circumstances, be to invite depredation. The provision of the sundry civil act for the removal of the fence has been continued from time to time and was specifically continued until the end of the current fiscal year by which time it is hoped that a new home for the Botanic Garden will have been found. Before the removal of the fence some provision should be made for transferring these valuable plants and shrubs and to avoid the expense of more than one removal they should be taken to the permanent home of the Botanic Garden. This removal ought not to be delayed longer than March or April of the current year.

Congress not only authorized the location of the Grant Memorial in accordance with the plan of 1901, but also it sanctioned the location of the Meade Memorial in conformity with the same plan.

To perpetuate the present Botanic Garden by additions in a space intended for park purposes can result only in confusion. The great memorials to General Grant and General Meade will be left without those landscape settings which are absolutely essential to their character and design. The Capitol will be left without that dignified approach which was one of the features of the plan prepared under the direct personal supervision of Washington and Jefferson. And all to no purpose, since the Botanic Garden even as enlarged will still be inadequate to perform the function intended. The enlarged area comprises less than 22 acres, whereas the smallest botanic garden of which we have record (that in Buenos Aires, Argentina) has 23 acres.

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The development of the eastern end of the Mall has been delayed for the want of accurate surveys on which to base a grading and planting plan. It is only recently that funds have been secured to make such a plan, but such a plan has been made and trees have been planted in accordance with it. The planting and grading can go forward as rapidly as the funds available will allow.

In view of the fact that so much progress has been made and that plans are ready to be carried out which will add to the attractiveness and usefulness of the Mall, any further encroachment in the way of buildings, however temporary, should not be allowed in that space.

It would be particularly unfortunate to extend the greenhouses, because already there are three sets of temporary greenhouses in the Mall--one set under the charge of the Agricultural Department, another set maintained by the Officer in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, and the third set belonging to the Botanic Garden. As the plan for placing public buildings along the south side of the avenue develops, all the space now devoted to greenhouses will be needed for park purposes or for public buildings. As buildings are constructed the demand for park space will increase in order to accommodate the people working in the new structures, and the orderly arrangement of this space will become imperative. The plan of 1901 provides for just this need.

This Commission recognizes the two functions of the Botanic Garden. First, the function is to supply an arboretum developed as highly as such

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This Commission recognizes the two functions of the Botanic Garden. First, the function is to supply as abundant development as highly as such

institutions are developed in other countries. This will require considerable land located necessarily some distance from the Capitol. The other function of furnishing flowers, seeds and cuttings to members of Congress is also recognized; and it is desirable to have greenhouses for the display of rare plants and flowers, but such gardens should be located where there is adequate room for expansion. We would suggest, therefore, that the space now occupied by the old James Creek Canal be devoted to this latter purpose. This would permit the extension of the present Botanic Garden space to the southeast and would provide a much needed improvement in a section of the city which has been neglected. But such an extension, even with the considerable additional area, is only a temporary expedient.

In this connection the Commission suggests that the space between the Capitol and the Union Station offers an opportunity ofr a series of Congress gardens that may be developed in a beautiful manner although even here greenhouses would not be desirable.

The bill as it passed the Senate provides that the greenhouses shall not occupy the space set apart for driveways or sites of public buildings in the plan of 1901. If the bill is to pass it would be much better to locate the greenhouses where the public buildings will come in the future, because then the ultimate disappearance of these structures might be looked forward to. It will be very unfortunate if in the line of vision between the Capitol and the Monument there should be created great areas of glass to make dazzling sheets of light in a vista that should be undisturbed and peaceful.

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We trust, therefore, that the development of the Botanic Garden will proceed along more adequate lines than will be possible if East and West Seaton parks with their limited available areas be adhered to. It would seem better to settle the matter now and settle it right than to provide the temporary makeshift which the bill calls for, with the resulting belittling of two important memorials.

Respectfully,

Chairman.

Hon. James L. Slayden,
Chairman, Committee on the Library
of the House of Representatives, U. S.

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We trust, therefore, that the development of the Botanic Garden will proceed along more adequate lines than will be possible if West and West Capitol parks with their limited available areas be adhered to. It would seem better to settle the matter now and settle it right then to provide the temporary makeshift which the bill calls for, with the resulting belittling of two important memorials.

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Hon. James L. Hayden,

Chairman, Committee on the Library

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